The Perfect Wife

aymon de albatrus

Proverbs 31:10-31

-

This beautiful poem of the biblical *virtuous woman* is designed to show what wives the women should make and what wives the men should choose. This exquisite picture of a truly lovely wife is conceived and drawn in accordance with the customs of Eastern nations, but its moral teachings are suitable for all times. It consists of twenty-two verses, each beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet starting from the first in order, as some of the *Psalms*, eg *Psa 119.*

There is no reason to attribute it to Lemuel or to his mother nor was it part of the lesson which Lemuel's mother taught him, but a poem by itself, written by some other hand, suggesting that it had been commonly repeated among the pious Jews, for the ease of which it was made alphabetical. It is an anonymous appendix to the whole book of Proverbs, exalting, as Proverbs does elsewhere, the honour and dignity of womanhood, and the importance of a mother's teaching to her children.

The abridgment of it is repeated in the New Testament where the duty prescribed to women agrees with this description of a good wife; and with good reason is so much stress laid upon it, since it contributes as much as any other thing to the keeping up of religion in families. For the sake of posterity it is important that the mothers be wise and good and submitted to godly order, and in a practical way completely given to the prosperity of their homes in a sensible manner.

1Ti 2:9,10 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Tit 2:3-5 The aged women likewise, that [they be] in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

1Pe 3:1-6 Likewise, ye wives, [be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation [coupled] with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

The acrostic of Proverbs 31 is clearly about a woman of position and ability. She has a large household, means, a plot of land, knowledge and charm. She is diligent, wise, and caring, devoted to her husband and to her family.

31.10
Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price [is] far above rubies

Pro 12:4 A virtuous woman [is] a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed [is] as rottenness in his bones.

The difficulty of meeting with such a one: *Where can he find* her? This implies that good women are *very scarce*, and many that seem to be so do not prove so. He that thought he had found a *virtuous woman* was deceived, *see, it was Leah,* and not the Rachel he expected. He that plans to marry ought to seek diligently for such a one, to have this principally in his eye, in all his enquires, and to take heed that he be not confused by beauty or gaiety or lustful desires, wealth or parentage, dressing well or partying well. For she may very well have all these attractions and yet not be a virtuous woman, at all, as these advantages are no certain recommendation of a good wife.

Pro 18:22 [Whoso] findeth a wife findeth a good [thing], and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

The essential qualities for a good woman (wife) is that she be *a virtuous woman an able woman* (the word includes strength), it is the same word that is used in the character of good judges (Exodus 18:21), that they are *able men*, men qualified for the business to which they are called, *men of truth, fearing God*. So it follows, a *virtuous woman* is a woman of spirit, a woman that is *able*, who has the command of her own spirit, though the weaker vessel, yet she is made strong by wisdom and grace, and the fear of God, one that is pious and industrious and a help meet for a man. In opposition to this strength, we read of the weakness of the heart *of an imperious whorish woman*, (Ezekiel 16:30). *A virtuous woman* is a woman of resolution, who, having espoused good principles, is firm and steady to them, and will not be frightened with winds and clouds from any part of her duty, for her security rests in the fear of God and the covering of her husband.

Pro 19:14 House and riches [are] the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife [is] from the LORD.

The unspeakable worth of such a wife, and the value which he that has such a wife ought to put upon her, showing it by his thankfulness to God and his kindness and respect to her, whom he must never think he can do too much for. *Her price is far above rubies,* and above all the rich ornaments with which *vain* women adorn themselves. Here she is compared to the worth of wisdom:

Pro 3:15 She [is] more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

The more rare such good wives are the more they are to be valued as shown by the respect given to Ruth:

Ruth 3:11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou [art] a **virtuous woman**.

31:11
The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil

The virtuous woman is a married woman. This is consistent with the teaching of the Bible for, God himself, in the beginning brought Eve to Adam to be his wife, his helpmeet and for the procreation of the race of man. The same principle applies here and is repeated in the NT to marry and have children, for example:

1Ti 5:14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Of course not every woman does marry for some may have a special calling, in the Lord. Nonetheless the general rule is for woman to marry and have children, not to stay single, play the field and live for a career.

So the married virtuous woman is very industrious to recommend herself to her husband's esteem and affection. A good woman is a good wife, and makes it her business to *please her husband*, 1Co 7:34 ..... how she may please [her] husband.

Though she is a woman of spirit herself, yet *her desire is to her husband*, to know his mind, that she may adapt herself to it, and she is willing that *he should rule over her*. She conducts herself so that he may rest full confidence in her, that he may trust in her chastity, which she never gave him the least occasion to suspect or to entertain any jealousy of. She is not moody and temperamental, but modest and dependable, and has all the marks of virtue in her physiognomy and behaviour. Her husband knows it, and therefore his *heart doth safely trust in her;* he is at ease, and makes her also that way. He trusts in her conduct, that she will speak in all companies, and act in all affairs, with prudence and discretion, so as not to cause him either damage or reproach. He trusts in her fidelity to his interests, and that she will never betray his counsels nor have any interest *separate from that of his family*. She is a good wife that is fit to be trusted, and he can confide in her to order all his affairs at home and to manage for him, as well as if he himself were there, when his duties require travel in official business.

His heart trusts in her with full confidence. He relies on her prudence and skill. She manages his affairs so that he is always beforehand, has such plenty of his own that he is in no temptation to prey upon his neighbours. She contributes so much to his contentment and satisfaction *that he shall have no need of spoil;* he needs not be griping and scraping or even go to war to obtain riches, as those whose wives are proud and wasteful at home. The word "no need" in Hebrew is the same used for "lack" in Psa 23:1 indicating "need or want", "spoil" can include captured girls (concubines) as in Jdg 5:30. But the more clear meaning is that of an expression of simple contentment, he is in need of nothing for she well satisfies him on all fronts. He thinks himself so happy in her that he envies not those who have most of the wealth of this world; he needs it not for he has enough, having such a wife.

Happy is the couple that have such a satisfaction as this in each other!

31:12
She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life

She will do him (husband) good

may seem ordinary and sounds as if he gets a good bargain, but "will do" in Hebrew is *gamal* (to reward, to bring) and can be a fuller word such as the same word translated 'deal bountifully' in (Psa 13:6; 142:7), conveying more of the glad goodwill she does to him.

Psa 13:6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt **bountifully** with me.

To do good, especially to the household of faith, is of course a main topic of Scripture with promise in both Testaments. (OT 560 times and NT 248 times):

Psa 37:3 Trust in the LORD, and **do good;** [so] shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Heb 13:16 But to **do good** and to share forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us **do good** unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

This good woman makes it her constant business to *do him good,* and is afraid of doing any thing, even accidently, that may displease her husband. She shows her love to him, not by foolish display of romanticism, but by prudent endearments, accommodating herself to his temper, avoiding crossing him by unwise words. Speaking to him softly with kind words, as a fit daughter of Sarah (1Pe 3:6), and not inflammatory bickering. No! Not even in the case of him being out of good humour. She truly is, in every sense, a peacemaker to him. She is an oasis of peace to her husband.

She considers how to make his life easy, to provide what is fit for him both in health and sickness, and attending to him with diligence and tenderness if he is not well. She does him good and nor would she, no, not for the world, willfully do any thing that might be a damage to his person, family, estate, or reputation.

All this she does with joy and not for a day or two when all things are well and rosy, for she is a dependable woman. She is given to him *all the days of her life,* "for better or worse, in health or sickness for richer or poorer" as the promise goes. **She** i**s for real**, not at first only, or now and then, when she is in a good humour, but perpetually; and she is not weary of the good kindnesses she does him. She gladly does all this, most reliably, not only because of real love towards him but also to please the Lord for ultimately ALL our good services are to be "unto the Lord":

Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, **as unto the Lord**.

She does him good,

not only all the days of *his* life, but *of her own* too; if she survive him, still she is doing him good in her care of his children, his estate, and good name, and all the concerns he left behind him.

In Ruth we read of this kindness shown, not only *to the living*, but also *to the dead*:

Ruth 2:20 And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed [be] he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.....

31:13
She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands

The writer now moves to quantify how the virtuous woman applies her virtuosity in a practical way as being not only so "spiritual" but also to be of Earthly use.

This good mother provides a fascinating picture of the applied role of the woman of the home in the ancient world, active in planning, trading, spinning, providing for her family.

Even ancient women of some status did work with their hands; and such, indeed, were the customs of Western women only a few short decades ago. Of course, in the East also, the fabrics were articles of merchandise and an active source of income as Paul tells us about Lydia:

Act 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

So our good woman applies herself to the business that is proper for her. It is not in scholar's business, or statesman's business, or theological business, or career business that she concerns herself, but in women's business. Now, in this lost generation "women's business" is seen as competition with men for jobs in the market place, but the Biblical role for woman (and man) is, as usual, eternal very distinct and very clear:

Tit 2:4 That they (older women) may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

Tit 2:5 [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Here Paul says to his man Titus that he is to know sound doctrine (not lollipop panacea) and to teach older women to be reverent in demeanour, to behave in a dignified manner, to be a good example and to pass on this teaching (women's role 1Ti 2:9,10 1Pe 3:3,4) to younger women (on a homely basis in private, not in public seminars) which is to perform **the role prescribed to woman by God** viz: to be self controlled, chaste, homemakers, kind-hearted, adapting and submitting themselves in obedience to their own husbands so that the word of God may not be exposed to reproach, blasphemed or discredited.

The same principle of role function is expected from the older women by 1Ti 5:10:

1Ti 5:10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

This godly woman does **not** concern herself in things outside her domain (the home) but seeks wool and flax (coverings), where she may have the best and cheapest for her family. She would have a reserve of both of them and also of every thing that is necessary to the carrying on of this most useful craft.

Note that not only she sets the poor to work, which is a very good office, but herself does not disdain *dirt work* for she works willingly with her hands. She takes delight in working with her hands (so the Hebrew

word is). She goes about it cheerfully and competently, applying not only her hands, but also her mind to it without weariness in this good work for her family.

31:14
She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar

She brings in provisions of all things necessary and convenient for her family. No *merchants's ships*, indeed, not even Solomon's navy, ever made a more advantageous return than her shopping does.

1Ki 9:26 And king Solomon made a navy of ships.....

1Ki 9:27-28 And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought [it] to king Solomon.

All nations bring in foreign goods with the effects they export. So does she with the fruit of her labours. What her own ground (vs 16 plot of land, field) does not produce she can obtain it by trading her own surplus to obtain it; so *she brings her food from afar*. Not that she values things more because they are exotic or from far away but, if that is what she must have for her family and it is to be found far away, then she is willing to go the extra mile and she is competent in getting it.

To meet this situation she always has available an adequate supply of whatever is needed for all those who are under her care, and with the work of her own hands she makes certain that they are fed properly and clothed appropriately.

This enterprising woman has a large pantry, well stocked of all the necessary ingredients to keep her family in health. Her 'refrigerator' is full to the brim, she is not afraid that some visitors may open it to find it empty in embarrassment.

It is always a joy to remember when Mum came home from shopping fully laden with bags of abundant provisions and how the young ones would scurry around her to discover the content, digging deep for that special surprise that mother always had for them. Surely she is like a merchant ship full of goods, even those very special cherished delicacies from afar off.

The virtuous woman is a good mother and does not consider these homely duties for the wife to be demeaning but rather rejoices in them as a fulfilment of her responsibilities to her family and to society in general. She knows how important her duties are for she is the bonding that glues the family together. Without her special presence the family is but a group of people lacking that warm affection theat only a faithful wife and devoted mother can provide.

31:15
She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens

This woman is the opposite of the sluggard

Pro 6:9-11 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? [Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

She rises

early, *while it is yet night* to give her servants their breakfast, that they may be ready to go cheerfully about their work as soon as the day breaks. She takes care of her family and all the affairs of it, *gives meat to her household*, she feeds every one of them so that none, not even her servants have reason to complain of being kept short or not receiving a fair share.

Pro 27:27 And [thou shalt have] goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and [for] the maintenance for thy maidens.

She is not the type of modern girl that "wanna have fun", who sits up at discos, or partying till midnight, or even till morning, and then lie in bed till noon. No, the *virtuous woman* loves her God given role better that her ease or her "pleasure". She is to be found in the way of her duty every hour of the day, and has more true satisfaction in having *given meat to her household* early in the morning than those who have wasted their money in foolishness and live in the pursuit of "wordly pleasures".

Beside those that have a family to take care of should not love their bed too much in the morning.

Pro 20:13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, [and] thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

She diligently attends to share as well as to the gathering of wealth, and indeed she is a wise steward for {her lord} has made her vice-ruler of his household.

Luk 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom [his] lord shall make ruler over his household, to give [them their] portion of meat in due season?

This woman is no fool for she has chosen well the better part of her vocation and attitude to life.

Ecc 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do [it] with thy might;.....

Rom 12:11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord...

Col 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do [it] heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men....

31:16
She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard

Here we have a remarkable picture of woman in Israelite society: trusted implicitly by her husband and amply rewarding that trust; hard-working and shrewd, with a liberty of choice and action in a wide range of affairs which goes to prove that there is much liberty when we submit to God's order even in situations which our "modern" minds find abhorring to our *sensitivity.*

There is freedom in godly submission.

2Co 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty.

She considers what an advantage a plot of land will be to her family and what good use it will be put to, and therefore she buys it. However, before buying it, she first carefully considers whether it is worth her money, whether she can afford to take so much money out of her housekeeping savings as much as required for the purchase. She is prudent and does not rush the buy, but checks whether the title is good, whether the ground is fruitful, and whether she has enough money to pay for it without incurring debts.

Many have got themselves in trouble by buying without considering; but those who would make advantageous purchases must consider, first, and then buy.

She also plants a vineyard

, but it is *with the fruit of her hands*; she does not borrow money, or run into debt, or goes back in the work force. but she does it with what she can spare out of the savings from her household money, with her smart shopping and her watchfulness in bargains. Men should not spend anything upon excesses, until, by the blessing of God upon their good work, extra funds are obtained to be able to afford it; and *then* the fruit of the vineyard is likely to be doubly sweet, when it is the fruit of honest industry

Note also that *vineyard* may figuratively denote that her prosperity i**s not short lived** for the vine-tree is long lived and as we have seen before, this woman is the opposite of the sluggard whose vineyard is overgrown with weeds:

Pro 24:30-31 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, [and] nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

No doubt, this good woman has received instruction from the sluggard's fate

Pro 24:32-34 Then I saw, [and] considered [it] well: I looked upon [it, and] received instruction. [Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come [as] one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

31:17
She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms

She does what she does with all her might, and does not trifle in it. She puts in it all that she has in her being. *She girds her loins with strength and strengthens her arms;* she does not employ herself in sitting work only, or in that which is only nice performances of the fingers (there are works that are but a little removed from doing nothing). She is well prepared, if the need is there, to go through with work that requires the strength she has, which she will use as one that knows where to get more of it to complete the task.

This verse implies more than physical strength but speaks of that inner resolve, in the spirit, to complete what has to be done, regardless of difficulties and opposition. She is set to persevere till the job is finished. It is clearly seen that the word "give up" is not in her vocabulary.

Many proverbs praise diligence and the profit it brings, and they condemn laziness as a cause of hunger and poverty, for example:

Pro 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth [with] a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

Pro 6:6-11 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, [and] gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? [Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Pro 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain [persons is] void of understanding.

Pro 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

Pro 12:27 The slothful [man] roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man [is] precious.

Pro 13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and [hath] nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

Pro 14:23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips [tendeth] only to penury.

Pro 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

Pro 28:19 He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain [persons] shall have poverty enough.

31:18
She perceiveth that her merchandise [is] good: her candle goeth not out by night

This good mother perceives that she can make things herself better and cheaper than she can buy them. By wise observation she sees which part of her work brings in the best returns, and to that she applies herself most closely. She makes sure that *in all* her *labour there is profit*, and that encourages her to go on in it.

She is one that makes what she does to turn to a good value, by her prudent management of it. She does not toil all night for nothing, no! She herself *perceives that her merchandise is good*, that is, worth her while. She wastes no precious time.

She is very careful in scheduling her time, that none of it be lost. When day-light is done, she does not then think it's time to stop work, as those forced to do so because their business lies in the open fields and therefore subject to day and night. She extends her "day" beyond that by resourcefully using artificial light.

Psa 104:23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

As her business lies indoors, some of her work can be done by candle-light. That way she lengthens out the day, that is why *her candle goes not out by night.* Now, of course, we have ample supply of better light and therefore greatly advantaged to do that special good work that smells of "midnight oil". Yet the good mother did all her repairs and knitting by the flickering feeble light of a candle with that inner joy which comes by knowing that this sacrifice is well worthy of her family.

Again we see the correlation of the virtuous woman with personified wisdom and indeed she is more profitable than silver and worth more than rubies, for truly blessed is the man who has an industrious wife because, for sure, his household will lack nothing even though his wage may not be high. On the contrary the man with a large income is assured to suffer poverty if he has a squandering wife

Pro 8:11 For wisdom [is] better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Pro 3:13-15 Happy [is] the man [that] findeth wisdom, and the man [that] getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it [is] better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She [is] more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

31:19
She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff

This wise woman does not disdain any work, however mean. If it is honest work which benefits her family, then she will do it, and she does not reckon it either a diminishing to her dignity or at all inconsistent with her well earned rest.

Spinning thread was woman's work and it was an important cog in society for from wool a thread was made for the knitting of clothings, such as coats, tunics, vestments and undergarments.

An interesting parallel to note is the description of our Lord's attire as described at His crucifixion: *Joh 19:23-24 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also [his] coat: now* ***the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.*** *They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: .....*

The word "coat" is translated from the Hebrew "chiton" meaning: "a tunic, an undergarment usually worn next to the skin". Contrary to the views of the exponent of the "prosperity doctrine", we do not read in the Bible about Him as having any valuable or remarkable possession except this "coat", and not for its richness but rather for its variety for it was *woven from the top throughout.*

The Roman soldiers cast lots for it as renting would have ruined it.

The thing to note here is that the coat was woven from spun wool. Tradition has it that actually his mother wove it for Him. Whether it was His mother (quite possible) or some other woman *Mat 27:55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him:* does not really matter here but it is an example of spindle application.

The spindle or spinning-wheel and the distaff are here mentioned as her honour, while a contrast can be seen in the ornaments of the daughters of Zion which are reproached for wasting their lives away in

vanity:

Isa 3:18-24 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of [their] tinkling ornaments [about their feet], and [their] cauls, and [their] round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. And it shall come to pass, [that] instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; [and] burning instead of beauty.

The virtuous woman is not decked with corruptible external ornaments, but, rather with non corruptible good works and a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. (1Pe 3:4)

31:20
She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy

She is hard-working and shrewd, with a liberty of choice and action in a wide range of affairs which she directs to the family good, at the same time remaining generous and kind-hearted.

This industry enables her to be charitable, *to the poor and to the needy* for there will always be poor people in the land (Deu 15:11 Mar 14:7).

Our good woman fulfils the earlier exhortations to care for the poor,

Pro 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy [is] he.

Shares food,

Pro 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Honours God,

Pro 14:31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

Will lack nothing,

Pro 28:27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

The Lord will deliver.

Psa 41:1 ..... Blessed [is] he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

She is as intent upon giving as she is upon getting, so that she could give away even more. She often serves the poor with her own hand, and she does it freely, cheerfully, and very liberally, with an outstretched hand.

Nor does she relieve her poor neighbours only, and those that are at hand, but *she reaches forth her hands to the needy* that are at a distance, seeking opportunities *to do good and to help relieve any desperate situation.*

She can be seen as the *female* JOB:

Job 31:16-20 If I have withheld the poor from [their] desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as [with] a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and [if] he were [not] warmed with the fleece of my sheep.....

31:21
She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household [are] clothed with scarlet

Scarlet-or,purple, by reason of the dyes used, (from rare shells: *Murex brandaris* and *Murex trunculus* from which small amount was extractable) were the best fabrics; available usually as a sign of prosperity. Purple/scarlet was the vestment colour for senators, kings and emperors both in Rome and elsewhere. These colours were also prized for priestly vestments in Israel's tradition as scripture has many references to scarlet usually together with blue and purple:

Exo 25:4 And blue, and purple, and **scarlet**, and fine linen, and goats' [hair],

Exo 36:35 And he made a vail [of] blue, and purple**,** and **scarlet**, and fine twined linen: [with] cherubims made he it of cunning work.

The palanquin seat of Solomon was purple:

Son 3:10 He made the pillars thereof [of] silver, the bottom thereof [of] gold, the covering of it [of] **purple**, the midst thereof being paved [with] love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

Our Lord was temporarily cloaked in purple, in mockery to His Kingship, prior to his crucifixion.

Joh 19:2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put [it] on His head, and they put on Him a **purple** robe, And said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they smote Him with their hands.

So scarlet or purple is the best cloth, used by royalty and no doubt the senator's robes which her husband wears are of her own spinning, and they look better and wear better than any that are bought, as we have seen before.

Also the noun is in the plural which could mean 'double' (thickness), which would explain the reference to snow, therefore these are also good warm clothing that she gets also for her children, and her servants alike. Double can also mean that *they are all double clothed*, thus having change of clothes, for winter and summer, of high quality, naturally and again probably made of wool from her own spindle.

She needs not fear the cold of the most frozen winter, for she and her family are well provided with clothes, more than sufficient to keep out the cold, which is the end result of her diligence to her work. *All her household are clothed in scarlet*, good and strong cloth fit for winter, and yet rich and making a good

appearance.

31:22
She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing [is] silk and purple

She makes herself coverings of tapestry

for her rooms, of her own making, thus she decorates her home well and richly without wasting her household money on fancy and expensive commodities for she is well competent in doing her own. Nothing is missing from her home, and even though they look as the most costly goods, she did not waste her cash on them but only purchased what she could not make herself.

Pro 7:16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved [works], with fine linen of Egypt.

Her own clothing

is rich and fine: it is *silk (fine linen) and purple*, according to her place and rank. As we saw before *purple* is linked with kings and the rich:

Jdg 8:26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred [shekels] of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and **purple raiment that [was] on the kings of Midian**, and beside the chains that [were] about their camels' necks.

Luk 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in **purple and fine linen**, and fared sumptuously every day:

Rev 18:16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in **fine linen, and purple, and scarlet**, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

Also fine linen has been associated with the nobility even early in history:

Gen 41:42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of **fine linen**, and put a gold chain about his neck;

The tabernacle of God had no less than the kingly *purple* and *fine linen*:

Exo 26:1 Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle [with] ten curtains [of] **fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet:** [with] cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.

By her good applications, our model woman, is as if she was rich. But she is not so vain as to spend much time in dressing herself, nor makes the putting on of apparel her adorning, nor values herself on wearing them for her adornings are the good works she does as a wife, as a mother and as a homemaker, as fitting to a woman of God. Yet she is blessed with rich clothes, silk and purple -*the best*- and puts them on well, as the occasion arises.

31:23
Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land

Domestic comfort contributes to her husband's advancement in public dignity and he is the recipient of special attention and recognition when he sits with the council of elders inside the city gate.

The gates was

where the men (*the elders*) of the city met to hold court of justice, local government and every other important matter.

Pro 22:22 Rob not the poor, because he [is] poor: neither oppress the afflicted **in the gate**:

Ruth 4:11 And all the people that [were] in the gate, and thE **elders,** said, [We are] witnesses. .....

Job 29:7 When I went out to the **gate** through the city, [when] I prepared my **seat** in the street!

She adds to his reputation in the world. *Her husband is known in the gates,* known to have a good wife. By his wise counsels, and prudent management of affairs, it is clearly seen by all that he has a discreet companion in his bosom. By his cheerful countenance and pleasant humour it is obvious that he has an agreeable wife at home. He is a happy man and highly respected for his choice.

It is said in many quarters that the worth of a man can be assessed by his choice of a wife.

This man has chosen wisely, he is not like many that have their tempers sadly soured by their life at home, *Pro 19:13 .....the contentions of a wife [are] a continual dropping,* and therefore are really disqualified from holding public office. In the NT we see clearly that Paul stipulates that if a man does not have his home in order then he cannot take care of the church of God:

1Ti 3: -5 One (

the elder*) that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*

1Ti 3:11 Even so [must their (

deacons*)] wives [be] grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

She is no nagging wife for he has time enough to be an elder of the city and sit and concentrate to perform a voluntary and important office for society without the disabilitating worries of a household in disorder.

His appearance is clean and neat in his dressing, every thing about him is decent and handsome, yet not loud. One just knows by the evidence on him that he has a good wife at home who takes good care of his clothes as well as his home, in all aspects. He is a rich man for at home he has a godly help-meet more valuable than rare rubies.

31:24
She maketh fine linen, and selleth [it]; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant

This industrious woman not only provides clothing for her own household, she also devotes her talents to making fabrics for sale to the city merchants. Such commodities as fine linen or linen shirts, or the material for them.

Girdles were often costly and highly valued as a present or to sell. (or even as a bribe)

1Sa 18:4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that [was] upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his **girdle**.

2Sa 18:11 .....I would have given thee ten [shekels] of silver, and a **girdle**.

She makes more than she and her household have need of and therefore, when she has sufficiently stocked her family, she sells the excess to the merchants who carry them to Tyre, the market of the nations, or some other trading city. Those families that produce more than they buy are likely to prosper just the same as with those nations when more of their home manufactures are exported than imported. It is no shame, even for those who are well off, to sell what they can spare, nor to deal in trade and send their wares to distant places.

Our busy beaver builds up for later for *she shall rejoice in time to come*, having laid in a good stock, for her family and having good portions for her children.

Those that take pains to prosper when they are capable will have the pleasure and joy of the increase later in life when they are old, both reflecting upon and in reaping the benefit of it.

Pro 30:24-25 .... they [are] exceeding wise: The ants [are] a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

This virtuous woman is prudent, industrious, ingenious and active for the good of her family and looks well after their welfare, just like the ant, she builds up her nest in summer, while the going is strong, so that when the snow comes she has no fear whatsoever for her household to be cold for they are clothed in scarlet because of her diligent provisioning.

Like the ant she prepares ahead. She sees the whole family situation and there is nothing that her wise eye does not consider for the wellfare of her beloved family. She makes sure of today's provisioning but also she prepares for tomorrow trusting in the Lord and applying that trust with her busy hands.

31:25
Strength and honour [are] her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come

She is without guile and there is nothing in her nature that debases her character, because she is clothed with strength (both of character and resolve), honour, and gentleness.

Strength and dignity are quite appropriate to such a good woman. Strength and honour can be put figuratively for moral character, vigorous and honourable.

She truly fits the godly woman model as depicted by Paul:

1Ti 2:9-10 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Which is exactly the opposite of being clothed with shame and disgrace:

Psa 35:26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify [themselves] against me.

She obviously has the comfort and satisfaction of her virtue in her own mind. *Strength and honour are her clothing* in which she wraps herself, that is, enjoys herself and in which she appears to the world. These are her "visiting cards", as it were, recommending her.

She enjoys a firmness and constancy of mind, has spirit to bear up under the many crosses and disappointments which even the wise and virtuous must expect to meet with in this world; and this is her clothing, for defence as well as decency.

Jesus, Himself, said, quite plainly, what we are to do and expect in this world:

Mat 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, "If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross, and follow me**".

Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. **In the world ye shall have tribulation**: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

She deals honourably with all, and she has much pleasure in doing so, *and shall rejoice in time to come*; for she is free of anxiety and worry. She shall reflect upon it with comfort, when she comes to be old, that she was not idle or useless when she was young.

In the day of death, as she is about to go home with the Lord, it will be a pleasure to her to think that she has lived to her prescribed godly good purpose with *fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore*.

31:26
She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue [is] the law of kindness.

Her conversation is wise and gentle and kindness is the theme of a good mother's teaching. She gives faithful instruction to her children and friends for she is a wise and loving counsellor whose example and behaviour have enhanced their knowledge of God by seeing what a godly woman and a perfect wife shall be:

Pro 1:8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

This special woman is of great and rare value for she is discreet and obliging in all her discourse:

Tit 2:5 [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Not talkative, censorious, nor irascible, as some are, that know not how to talk and behave loosely and cause pains to others:

1Ti 5:13 And withal they learn [to be] idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

She opens her mouth with wisdom

; when she does speak, it is with a great deal of prudence and very much to the purpose. She uses economy of words, she rambles not. It is easily discerned by every word she says how much she governs herself by the rules of wisdom.

She not only takes prudence for herself, but gives prudent advice to others; and this not as assuming lording over others, but with the affection of a friend and as to please others for their own good. *In her tongue is the law of kindness*, all she says is under the government of that law.

Gal 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, [even] in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The law of love and kindness is written in the heart, but it shows itself in the tongue. It is called a *law of kindness*, because it gives law to others as her wisdom and kindness, together, put a commanding power into all she says.

How *forceful* are right words in wisdom and kindness, they command respect, they command acquiescence!

In her tongue is the law of grace

(or *mercy)*, to be understood as the Word and Law of God, which she delights to talk of among her children and servants. She is full of pious religious discourses, and manages it prudently, which shows how full her heart is of another world even when her hands are most busy in this world.

She is most useful on this Earth even though her eyes are fixed on the Lord of Glory.

31:27
She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness

She adds to her example a wise management of her home.

1Ti 5:14 .....guide the house,....Tit 2:5 .... keepers at home,.....

She looks well to the ways of her household

, she inspects the behaviour and working ways of all her servants, that she may check what needs adjusting among them, and exhort them all to behave properly and do their duty to God and to one another, as well as to her. We see in Timothy the kind of godly influence a good mother can have on a child:

2Ti 1:5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

2Ti 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,.....

This godly woman keeps her house spiritually **clean** in front of the Lord just as Job, who put away iniquity far from his tabernacle:

Job 11:14 If iniquity [be] in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

and similarly David, who would **not suffer** any *wicked thing* in his house.

Psa 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; [it] shall not cleave to me.

Her noble character is much expanded here.

She is shown as a woman who takes seriously the duties of her home and obviously she has much pleasure in them. She hates to sit still and do nothing for *she eats not the bread of idleness*. Even though she has an estate to support her and she need not work for her bread, yet she will not eat it in idleness because she knows that none of us came into this world to be idle. She also knows that when we have nothing to do then the Devil will, soon enough, find us something to do.

She is well aware that it is not fit that those who *will not work* should *eat*.

2Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

She does not interfere in the concerns of other people's houses, for she thinks it is enough for her to look well to her own. Nor does she relish fashionable entertainments for these are the eating of the bread of idleness, similarly she does not give or receive idle visits or idle talk. She is a source of strength and example of diligence for her family, and her great concern is to build (not to destroy) her home wisely in a godly manner, and all for the Glory of God.

Pro 14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

31:28
Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praiseth her

She receives the respect and praise she deserves, hinting that her training of the household has avoided many tragedies:

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Pro 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son [is] the heaviness of his mother.

Pro 15:20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Pro 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame.

A natural outcome of her conduct is the way in which she becomes the object of spontaneous praise and admiration from her husband, children, and others.

It is said that if one really wants to know who one is really like, then ask your children. This virtuous woman needs not ask for she is readily and greatly honoured by those who know her best.

Her children

grow up in her home, *and* they *call their mother blessed*. They give her their good words and they esteem greatly their mother. They pray for her, and thank God for such a good mother. They gladly honour and respect her, in addition to the debt which they owe as required by the fifth commandment to be paid to father and mother. Infact they give with joy the double honour that is due to a good father and a good mother. Indeed these well behaved children are themselves a visible commendation to her.

Eph 6:2-3 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

She is a great blessing to her relations, especially to *her husband* who thinks himself so happy in her that he takes all occasions to speak well of her with high praises for her conduct toward him and his family. It is known that the man is by nature the initiator and the woman is by nature the responder and this is shown well here for she values her husband's praises by responding in *doing him good all the days of her life.*

We see here a picture of laudable conjugal love, and an example to be imitated for it is lovely to dwell in peace and for husbands and wives to give one another their due praises.

31:29
Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all

These words are those of her husband, praising her virtuosity as a confirmation of vs. 10. In effect he is positively saying: "you are a woman of noble character and you have done well".

In addition to her husband's praises she is also honoured by the good word of all her neighbours, just as Ruth did, whom *all the city of her people knew* to be *a virtuous woman*, Ruth 3:11. Her good deeds are plain for all to see.

Virtue will have its praise,

Phi 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] **any virtue**, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.

From verse 10 we learn that virtuous women are rare and valuable, far above precious jewels, and here we see that *many have done virtuously,* but such one as this one cannot be compared for she is in a class all of her own. Clearly *she excels them all,* and her aim and desire are to keep excelling in virtue.

We see here a comparison to dedicated daughters: *many daughters have done virtuously [worthily]*, in their father's house as single women, respectful, caring and obedient such as Zelophehad's who were concerned that their father's namewould disappear for he had no sons and bravely went to Moses: *Num 27:4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us [therefore] a possession among the brethren of our father.*

Subsequently after obtaining the land they were told that they had to marry within their father's tribal clan to retain the inheritance. These noble women obeyed the Lord: *Num 36:10 Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad:*

Nevertheless a good wife, if she be virtuous, excels them all for Zelophelah's daughters were also interested in their own personal inheritance and were looking at a nest of theit own, whilst the good wife is on her nest already and therefore her diligence to it is superior thus a man cannot have his home so well kept by good daughters as by a good wife as her home is her castle where she is the queen.

31:30
Favour [is] deceitful, and beauty [is] vain: [but] a woman [that] feared the LORD, she shall be praised

Favour (charm) is deceptive and beauty of face is fleeting:

Pro 5:3-5 For the lips of a strange woman drop [as] an honeycomb, and her mouth [is] smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

Pro 11:22 [As] a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, [so is] a fair woman which is without discretion.

Job 14:1,2 Man [that is] born of a woman [is] of few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down: he is fleet also as a shadow, and continues not.

Beauty does not recommend any one to God, nor is it any certain indication of wisdom and goodness, but it has deceived many a man who has made a foolish choice of a wife by it. There may be an impure deformed soul lodged in a nice and beautiful body, indeed many have been exposed by their beauty to the temptations of the flesh to the ruin of their virtue, their honour, and their precious souls. Beauty is but a fading investment at the best, and therefore *vain* and *deceitful*. Sudden sickness will taint and mar it in a moment and any accident may blast this flower in its prime, and of course, old age will certainly waste it and death and grave consume it.

But the fear of God, reigning in the heart, is the beauty of the soul and it is this that recommends those that have it to the favour of God, for in His sight, this is of great price. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge, lasting forever in defiance of death itself, which consumes the beauty of the body, and will remain with the soul as we go to rest our heads on the bosom of our marvellous Lord.

Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge: [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction.

This woman that fears the Lord shall be praised, for this completes and crowns her character. With all these good qualities she lacks not that *one thing needful*, for she has chosen wisely, and whether she eats or drinks, or whatsoever she does, she does all to the glory of God which is far preferred to *beauty*, which is by its own nature *vain and deceitful.*

True piety alone commands permanent respect and affection :

1Pe 3:3-5 Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

31:31
Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates

Give her the reward she has earned, let her enjoy the *fruit* she has *planted*:

Pro 12:14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of [his] mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

Real honour comes through *humility and the fear of the Lord:*

Pro 22:4 By humility [and] the fear of the LORD [are] riches, and honour, and life.

Some are praised above what is their due, but those that praise our good woman do it so simply as a recognition *of the fruit of her hands,* this honour she has truly earned and it is justly due to her, quite plainly seen by all.

Our Lord has said:

Mat 7:16,17 **Ye shall know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

The tree is known by its fruits, and therefore if the fruit is good, then the tree must receive our praises. If her children be obedient and respectful to her, and conduct themselves as they ought, they then *give her of the fruit of her hands*. She therefore, reaps the benefit of all the care she has given to them, and thinks herself well rewarded by their behaviour.

The fruit of unjust men will speak for itself, but in her case *her own works* will *praise her in the gates*, **openly before all the people.** She leaves it to her own works to praise her, and does not chase after approval of man, rather she does all things for the glory of God for it is not comely for truly virtuous women to love to hear themselves commended. Even if relations and neighbours say nothing about her, *her own works* will praise her, and that is enough.

The weeping widows gave the best eulogy of Dorcas when they stood by Peter showing the tunics and garments she had made for the poor. Similarly her neighbours ought to *let her own works praise her*, and do nothing to hinder them. Those that *..... do that which is good, ... shalt have praise of the same:*

Rom 13:3.

Therefore let us give honour where honour is due without malice or envy and do what the Apostle Paul said: "*follow me as I follow Christ"* and let no evil communication proceed from our mouths for one day we will have to give account to God of every idle word that proceedeth from our mouth.

And so ends this beautiful mirror for women for them to adorn with and, if they do so, then they will fulfil what God requires of them, viz. *1Ti 2:15 ...she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*

The Perfect Woman - Conclusion

The Good Wife

.

Nothing can add to the simple beauty of this admirable portrait of the Biblical woman, even though modern western readers may notice in this hymn of praise a lack of emphasis on relationships or a rather unromantic view. They are welcome to have beauty and charm in their list of desirable qualities provided they keep the other qualities (given here) on their list as well:

10 virtuous	11 faithful	12 committed
12 loyal	13 active	14 good shopper
15 early riser	16 enterprising	17 hardworking
18 late retirer	19 dextrous	20 generous
20 compassionate	21 secure	23 respectful
23 submitted	24 industrious	25 honourable
26 wise	26 kind	28 blessed
30 God fearing	31 praiseworthy	

And not only does she possess a long list of attributes, but also she matches well Paul's description of love (charity, agape) in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

Love is patient	12 *all the days of her life*
love is kind	26 *her tongue [is] the law of kindness*
it does not envy	29 *but thou excellest them all*
it does not boast	31 *her own works praise her in the gates*
it is not proud	30 *beauty [is] vain*
it is not rude	26 *she openeth her mouth with wisdom*

it is not self-seeking	28 *her husband ..... praiseth her*
it is not easily angered	21 *she is not afraid of the snow*
it keeps no record of wrongs	10 *who can find a virtuous woman*
Love does not delight in evil	12 *do him good and not evil*
but rejoices with the truth	30 *a woman [that] feareth the LORD*
it always protects	21 *her household clothed with scarlet*
always trusts	11 *her husband doth safely trust in her*
always hopes	25 *she shall rejoice in time to come*
always perseveres	18 *her candle goeth not out by night*
Love never fails	31 *her own works praise her*

The point here is that beauty and charm can be deceptive and fleeting by comparison with the fear of the LORD and the good works in Him.

Love in marriage is not often remarked in the OT, but it is there in a most exquisite way, not to be mistaken with the distorted view of "love" as shown on the screens of the modern man.

Gen 24:67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and **she became his wife; and he loved her**: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's [death].

Gen 29:18,20 And **Jacob loved Rachel;** and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him [but] a few days, **for the love he had to her**.

1Sa 1:5 But unto Hannah he gave a double portion; **for he loved Hannah**: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

1Sa 18:20 And **Michal** Saul's daughter **loved David:** and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

Ecc 9:9 Live joyfully with **the wife whom thou lovest** all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that [is] thy portion in [this] life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

Est 2:17 And the **king loved Esther** above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

In Proverbs we see joy and passion expressed in a very positive way with all personal and intimate relationship between a man and his wife, speaking of faithfulness and the bed undefiled.

Pro 5:15-19 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, [and] rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and **rejoice with the wife of thy youth**. [Let her be as] the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and **be thou ravished always with her love**.

Romantic love is not absent from the OT, but romantic love cannot sustain a family or a deep relationship for a lifetime. What we see in the virtuous woman is real solid applied love that hopes all things and never fails **and** is Biblical.

Furthermore Proverbs shows respect for the mother and wife as a woman of worth if she be virtuous (noble) and is here commended for the dignity and credit she adds to her husband, contrasted to *she that maketh ashamed* who is a constant erosion to his position as the head of the home as the order prescribed by God for humankind.

Pro 12:4 A virtuous (noble) woman [is] a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed [is] as rottenness in his bones.

Often pointing out how fortunate a husband is to have so good a wife:

Pro 18:22 [Whoso] findeth a wife findeth a good [thing], and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

Pro 19:14 House and riches [are] the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife [is] from the LORD.

So we see that this eulogy is not only praise of the ideal wife but also sound advice to the would-be husband in what to look for and how to choose a good wife that is well disposed for all moral and practical duties for the rest of his life.

A woman that *will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Pro 31:12*

In summary Proverbs 31:10-31 depicts the perfect will and call of God to the woman who would be a perfect wife and a godly woman:

That she fears the LORD
That she respects and does good to her husband all her life
That she brings honour to her husband by her voluntary submission
That she looks personally after her own children
That she performs home duties
That she provides good food and clothing for her family
That she is a hard worker
That she cleverly invests household money
That she be softly spoken
That she be not decked with vulgar apparel and fancy hairstyle but adorned instead with good works.
That her virtuosity is known far and wide
That she is blessed by her family and rewarded praises from her husband
That she is a public example of a godly woman
That, indeed, she is a ruby above measure

Which are all repeated in the NT:
1Ti 2:9,10; 5:10,14 and Tit 2:3-5 and 1Pe 3:1-6

With much help from Matthew Henry -- Puritan expositor